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U.S. Has to Stay in Asia Long Time, Rusk Says

NEW YORK, May 15 (AP)—Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, predicted today that American military involvement in Asia will be a long-term affair.

"We'll be involved out there till the end of the century," Wheeler said in an article in the May 30 issue of Look magazine.

In the same issue, Rusk said it will be "useful for some time to come for American power to be able to control every wave of the Pacific, if necessary." If Communist China "stays militant and hardnosed," he added, "it is difficult to see how a confrontation can be forever avoided."

Wheeler was quoted as saying he finds the present situation in Thailand, which the United States is committed to defend, "highly reminiscent" of South Vietnam in 1960-61, when the United States had about 2000 troops there.

The United States maintains a half-dozen large air bases in Thailand, along with tens of thousands of troops.

"If there were a mainland China that made it clear it would live at peace with its neighbors . . . the American people would be content to tend to their own problems and leave the rest of the world alone," Rusk said.

Time may be on our side, he said. "If the nations of free Asia slowly find their feet, learn to cooperate . . . and if China itself grows, like the Soviet Union, into a more moderate, less zenophobic power . . . perhaps we can have peace on our western frontier," he said.

But he added, "it takes optimism to scent that happy a future."